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SUBJECT: SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION UPDATE

#### SUMMARY

1. South central region of Somalia is the most unstable area of the country where insecurity exists primarily due to interclan fighting, tensions brought about by the spread of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), and the ineffective governance of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

2. While the current short rains are essentially ending the multiyear drought, recovery and rehabilitation activities in the south central region are being hampered by ongoing insecurity and fighting between UIC and TFG, resulting in internal displacement and migration of populations across regional borders. Localized flooding is also impeding critical farming activities in Juba and Shabelle valleys. While access to vulnerable populations in UIC controlled areas by humanitarian stakeholders has improved, registration requirements for NGOs by the newly formed UIC Department of Planning and Development may soon impede NGO operations in UIC held regions. END SUMMARY

#### BACKGROUND

3. The south central region of Somalia was severely affected by the recent drought that was felt throughout the Horn of Africa in 2005 and 2006. More than 1.1 million pastoralists and agro pastoralists in southern and central Somalia experienced an acute food and

livelihood crisis and humanitarian emergency brought about by three consecutive failed rainy seasons and ongoing civil insecurity that resulted in crop failure, extensive livestock death, high food prices, abnormal population movement and extreme shortages of and limited access to water and food.

¶4. The lack of a functioning central government, civil strife, inter-clan conflicts, and confrontations between Somali warlords and militias associated with the UIC, further complicated the humanitarian situation and limited access to affected areas.

¶5. In response to the Somalia drought, the United States Government provided more than 91 million dollars in humanitarian assistance comprising food donations and distribution as well as emergency water, health, nutrition and livelihood support interventions facilitated by UN agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs).

#### GOOD SEASONAL RAINFALL BUT-

¶6. According to Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), heavy rains are ongoing throughout most regions of Somalia, with the heaviest reported in Juba and Shabelle valleys, Gedo, Bay and Hiran Regions in southern Somalia with less rainfall in central Somalia and the northern regions.

¶7. Some districts in southern Somalia are experiencing torrential rains with flash flooding. Due to heavy rains in the upper catchments of the Ethiopian highlands, downstream flooding has been reported in the riverine areas of Gedo, Juba and Shabelle valleys. This flooding has resulted in population displacement, crop damage and destruction of infrastructure in several districts including areas around Mogadishu. In Lower and Middle Shabelle Regions, about 2000 hectares of maize and sorghum crops were destroyed by cresting of the Shabelle River according to FSAU.

¶8. While the rains have wrought havoc on agricultural districts, a more positive impact is being felt in pastoralists regions with pasture and browse regeneration and replenished aquifers. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is monitoring the situation and since the rains are expected to continue through November, a comprehensive flood impact assessment on crop production is premature at this time, however, OCHA is coordinating a multi-agency assessment of the impact of the floods on the humanitarian situation in Gedo Region, so far the worst affected region.

#### FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION - A SLOW RECOVERY

¶9. Food security and livelihood conditions are improving in the northeast and northwest regions of Somalia, however, the recent drought and food insecurity in the south central regions continues to impact on children under five as evidenced by high global acute malnutrition (GAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates above internationally accepted norms.

¶10. Action Contra Faim (ACF) conducted a nutrition survey in Wajid District of Bakool Region in July 2006 and found very high global and severe acute malnutrition rates of 33.5 and 5.4 percent respectively. Since this study was conducted just prior to the main harvest, ACF will facilitate another survey later this year to monitor trends. ACF is implementing community therapeutic care (CTC) feeding programs in the district and also providing a general food ration for families of malnourished children. ACF is also conducting nutrition education sessions and promoting kitchen gardens for beneficiaries of their feeding programs.

¶11. International Medical Corps (IMC) is also scaling up supplemental and therapeutic feeding programs in Bay and Bakool Regions and report unusually high numbers of feeding program beneficiaries for this time of year, another indication that drought recovery is progressing slowly.

#### INSECURITY AND ITS IMPACT

¶12. In the last several months there has been increased population displacement within Somalia and across regional borders due to skirmishes between local, TFG backed, and UIC militias. The UIC has expanded into Lower and Middle Juba and Hiran Regions in the south and Galgadud and Mudug Regions in central Somalia. While the areas under the control of UIC have experienced improved security, fear of outright "war" between the TFG, UIC, local militias and external actors continues to spur population movement.

¶13. Most of the first wave of Somalia refugees seeking safe haven in Kenya were minority clans and Bantus who have no widespread clan support and whose economic livelihoods are most at risk during times of insecurity. Many of these early refugees were khat sellers, petty traders, casual laborers and charcoal venders in urban settings and subsistence farmers from riverine districts who lacked access to clan support in times of economic stress. More recent arrivals are said to be from middle classes and may be seeking refuge in camps to await asylum in other countries. Many refugees interviewed by various assessment teams report fear of lifestyle restrictions by the UIC.

¶14. According to UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), about 3000 people crossed the border into Kenya in August and while 6,200 and 7,000 crossed the border into Kenya in September and October. The refugees are mainly coming from Mogadishu, Kismayo, Baidoa, Buale, and Doble in southern Somalia. Since January of 2006, UNHCR estimates that about 37,000 Somalis entered Kenya seeking refuge, swelling the northeastern Kenya Dadaab refugee camp population from about 127,000 to approximately 160,000, with an estimated 10,000 additional refugees waiting to be registered and processed.

¶15. Insecurity and tension in southern Somalia has also impeded progress of several US Agency for International Development, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID OFDA) implementing partners operating in Middle Juba and Bay Region. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and IMC working in Dinsor District and World Concern in Jilib District report slow progress in program implementation due to frequent evacuations of international staff and disruption of program activities due to insecurity. Squabbling between local actors in TFG held territory is also negatively impacting drought recovery efforts with some clan cartels seeking control of NGO resources such as vehicle and office rental, staff hiring and procurement tenders. While the TFG is in control in Bay and Bakool Regions, NGOs report that local sentiment is turning in favor of the UIC, citing community dissatisfaction with the TFGs failure to deliver basic social services and lack of leadership.

¶16. NGOs operational in Bakool and Hiran Region and in Mogadishu report business as usual, movement in and around Mogadishu has much improved with UIC eliminating banditry and other forms of insecurity within the city. NGOs operational in areas near the Ethiopian border in Bakool and Hiran Regions report stable security conditions at this time.

¶17. FSAU reports that if widespread conflict was to occur, the impact on the humanitarian situation in south and central regions would be severe, doubling the 1.8 million people currently needing humanitarian assistance

in Somalia.

OLD CASELOAD IDPS - "ONCE AN IDP, ALWAYS AN IDP"

¶18. Now that access to Mogadishu has improved for international NGOs, a number of agencies have entered the city to conduct assessments of the humanitarian situation of the general population and internally displaced persons (IDPs). United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) and FSAU estimate that Mogadishu has about 250,000 IDPs in about 400 camp sites, who are living in abysmal conditions throughout the city. IMCs recent assessment in Mogadishu reports most IDPs have been living in the camps and abandoned government buildings and compounds in the city center since the early 1990s.

¶19. IDP camp population is mainly women, children and elderly. The male IDP population engages in petty trade or work as porters in the main markets and as casual laborers on construction sites. Bantu men return to their areas of origin to engage in farming activities until after harvest. IDP camps are divided along clan lines, mostly Bantu and other minorities.

¶20. Prior to the takeover of Mogadishu by the UIC, minimal basic services were provided by UN agencies, international and local NGOs, and well as a number of Islamic relief and development groups. Reintegration of Mogadishu IDPs into general society was never an option due to lack of a strong local administration and long-standing resistance by majority clans.

¶21. Since the takeover of the capital by the UIC, the general security situation in the city and IDP camps has improved with increased access to the camps by additional aid agencies. IDP committees are being formed in the camps and they are aggressively seeking widespread assistance and support from the UIC and aid agencies. IDPs report significantly less discrimination, harassment, and sexual abuse since the collapse of the militias and local gangs and takeover of the city by the UIC. IDPs highlight ongoing priority needs as food, new shelter, sanitation, income generation activities, education and reintegration.

#### UIC CLAMPING DOWN

¶22. Local and international NGOs operating in UIC held districts are currently negotiating with the UIC on issues related to registration and operating permits, a situation that many NGOs fear could result in operational restrictions and various taxations. In mid October, the Planning and Development Office of the UIC sent notice to the NGO community that all local and international NGOs must register with the UIC in Mogadishu by November 5, 2006. The UIC also required NGOs to purchase their registration applications and file NGO profiles and operating plans. If registered, NGOs would be required to pay a registration fee of 250 dollars for local groups and 500 dollars for international agencies. On payment of registration fees, the NGO would have to purchase their operational certificates, again for a fee. The UIC is also requiring NGOs to pay an annual fee for vehicles and guard's weapons.

¶23. Additional conditions of NGOs were listed in the notice such as submission of work plans that must be approved by the UIC, as well as restricting from participating in anti Islamic or political activities.

¶24. The Nairobi-based NGO Consortium formed a task force to negotiate with the UIC. Mogadishu based members of the task force met with the UIC in Mogadishu on November 5, 2006. The UIC extended the deadline for NGO registration to November 20, 2006 and refused to allow the NGOs to register from Nairobi or other UIC held districts in Somalia, requiring all to present

representatives in Mogadishu for the screening process. The UIC is now imposing visa requirements for entry to Somalia. The NGO Consortium is drafting a comprehensive response to the UIC demands and six NGO representatives plan to meet the Planning and Development Committee in Mogadishu next week. The NGO community is seeking clarification on a number of issues, not just payment of fees.

¶25. As of now the UIC is showing willingness to negotiate with the NGO community however, a number of agencies fear the UIC sees the NGO community as resource rich, wishing to manipulate vehicle and office rental, procurement, impose taxes and direct program interventions.

#### CONCLUSIONS

¶26. UN agencies, NGOs, and donor agencies are preparing contingency plans in the event of further deterioration of security and its impact on vulnerable populations in Somalia and neighboring countries. UNOCHA is also conducting a best case worst case scenario workshop for the Horn of Africa in Nairobi on November 20, 2006.

¶27. USAID/OFDA regional officers will continue to monitor the humanitarian situation and continue to report on drought recovery efforts as well as climate and security conditions that impact the humanitarian situation.

RANNEBERGER